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1959-01-26, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

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26 January 59
Monday Night
8 PM

Dear Mom and Hugh Elmer,

This is the first minute I've had to write again. I got your card and letter today, Mom - first mail that's run since I got here - that's 6 days for a letter, just about!

Today was my day off and Pelly's too, but I had to teach an hour at an In-Service Training Program, so I had to go in uniform this p.m. - spoiled my day off. I was off yesterday, too but spent it getting my tank prepared.

The kids have knocked themselves out taking me around to see all the sights and I've seen so much I don't know where to start telling you about it. For my birthday they took me down into Naples to the Green Lantern Restaurant - a real Italian place and we had a really good birthday dinner. The Italians are quite plentiful and have the only places clean enough to eat in. If you don't eat anything the Arabs cook or sell raw. To do so would be to ask for hookworm, intestinal upsets, diarrhea, and the like. The next evening we went to the Club for Happy Hour and met a million people. One of the pilots that all the girls knew took me to dinner and then we all drove downtown into Naples to the home of one of the dentists



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for a party. The pilot had a flight to Germany the next day and I could have gone if I'd been off. Saturday night we went down town again for dinner at the Del Mebrani, a very fancy Italian restaurant, and we had five courses. The first one was spaghetti, #2 was fish & lemon slice, #3 was real culetts #4 was salad and bread & Chesses, #5 was dessert - ice cream & chocolate syrup and #6 Espresso coffee (Hawaii they call it) which is thick syrupy coffee - strong enough to float a battleship. He had trouble walking out after all that food!

Sunday night, Joe, the pilot, was back from Germany and he took me out to dinner at the Officers' Club.

I've worked like a beaver ever since I got here. So far I'm still on the surgical service. I don't think I'm going to be moved because the Chief of the Service wants me to stay on surgery.

The Arabs are an odd bunch. It's hard to figure how they live in the squalor and poverty. They think we're rich because they have so little and we have so much. The ones who work here as house maids wear the awfallest garb you ever saw. If an Arab man comes up here to deliver something they grab these rags and cover their heads and faces except for one eye. They call these garbs "Barricans". I have one ordered just for the heck of it - will make a fine masquerade outfit.



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Transportation is quite a problem here. Three of the kids have cars and if they're off, we have a way to get places. They all want us to drive their cars but I don't want to until I have been here awhile longer. I'm going to buy a bicycle, because I need the exercise and the weather here is beautiful. It's sunny most all the time, but cool enough for a light jacket at night.

The Mediterranean is beautiful. It's so blue it's unbelievable. It's just one block from us. I haven't been on the beach yet but were going to go horseback riding along there soon.

I ordered a hi-fi set from Germany, but probably won't get it for 2-3 months. Percy's ~~is~~ ^{new} hi-fi has already come and it's a beautiful thing. We have already started collecting records. I'll be glad when our household goods arrive. I have the barest room. Everybody else's is stacked with stuff they've bought.

I have a job for you, Mom, if you don't mind. Buy me some bath powder - Aqual Marine, or Command Performance or Sabon - any kind,

② Tussey liquid spray deodorant - send about 3 or 4 - all they have is arid which I can't stand. ③ about 6 boxes of Dove soap - they have only 3 or 4 kinds.

④ Max Factor pancake makeup - Jan # 2.

⑤ Revlon Orange flip lipstick - one tube.

⑥ call the Merle Norman Studio on Church and see if they will send you Merle Norman midtone powder base if they will, send one or two. I hate to



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ask you to do this, but they just don't have these things. He won't eat out as much when our chef comes. The food except at the places we have gone is terrible. I can't stand the bread or the milk. Joe is going to bring me milk from Germany. The stuff here is sterilized and tastes like its rotten dried milk. The bread is awful - can't describe it. If you want to, send a couple of loaves of salt risen or overita wrapped in aluminum foil. It should keep. We are all hungry for bread. As soon as I get my fry pan I'm going to reclaim to make biscuits because we can get Crisco and white lily. Its funny how little things become so important over here. We have no lettuce.

The girls are lots of fun. The one of them that I like best is the one I'm replacing - Ernie. She's a nut. She's so happy to be going home its cute to watch. She leaves 1 April.

I'm in Pally room with 6 of them, the Hi-fi is blaring and they're all singing. Ill quit cause I keep getting mixed up & writing what they're saying.

I miss you,
Love you.
Betty